

## AMERICAN FOOD VESSELS EXEMPT, SAYS EMBASSY

German Ambassador Hopes England Will Not Force Change in That Policy by Seizing the Wilhelmina and Cargo.

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The official text as received from Ambassador Gerard shows that only British waters are to be regarded in the new danger zone, and that the route north of the Shetland Islands, in the eastern part of the North Sea and a strip thirty miles wide along the Dutch coast are not included in the area in which the new German operations are to be feared. The effect of this corrected announcement is to make it clear that Germany intends apparently no interference with the shipping of Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway in passing over its accustomed routes to and from those countries, with the exception of the routes through strictly British waters.

Ambassador Gerard also cabled that the German Admiralty has issued a long memorandum in explanation of the proclamation. This will be forwarded to the United States Government with no steps in the matter.

### Some Definite Plans.

The opinion still prevails here that the purpose of the German announcement is to secure if possible all the effects of a blockade, without undertaking what is impossible for Germany to achieve by procuring an actual blockade which could not be made effective. Naval officers are of the opinion that the German navy really has some definite plans in view, and it is expected to begin on February 15, the day mentioned in the announcement, and that this programme will be an important factor in the situation. One feature of the programme, it is expected, will be general offensive operations against British shipping by means of submarines.

The statement issued at the German Embassy to-day throws some light on Germany's probable intentions and the manner in which she is to execute her plans. The statement is as follows:

"The German Ambassador has not received instructions regarding the decision in the situation, but according to the text of the decision the following seems clear:

"There is nothing new in the communication of February 4. The German Admiralty with respect to attitude of the German Imperial navy toward ships of the enemy or toward neutral commerce. It is absurd to describe the attitude of the German Imperial navy as the attitude of the navy of all the belligerent Powers toward ships of the enemy.

"A few months ago the English Admiralty proclaimed the closing of the North Sea, the waters of which are essentially neutral. Germany does not intend to molest or seize American vessels laden with foodstuffs for the civilian population of enemy countries. It is to be hoped that England will not make necessary a reconsideration of this attitude by seizing American ships like the Wilhelmina.

### Answer to Prize Offer.

"Germany does, however, announce to the world that it proposes to continue to destroy ships belonging to the enemy, and it adds the notification to neutral Powers that on account of the fact that British ships are employing neutral flags according to secret instructions now known to have been issued by the British Government, belligerent neutral vessels may actually be endangered.

"Although, according to well understood international law, the use of force of warlike naval vessels are perfectly justified in destroying merchantmen of the enemy, the German Government now seeks to issue simply a general reminder to that effect, stating the actual radius of operations of the German submarines.

"The warning may also be taken as in the nature of an answer to the offer of a prize of \$2,500 made in England for the first British merchant ship that succeeds in ramming and sinking a German submarine.

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man submarine—an offer calculated to make long abandoned practice of privateering.

Officials here found most of the German Embassy's statements to deal with questions of importance chiefly to Germany and Great Britain, covering only slightly or not at all the phase of the situation of most vital interest to the United States, the statement's reference to the Wilhelmina as a threat of a seizure of all vessels carrying food to England is seen. There is no doubt that Germany is anxious to have the United States take a vigorous stand in defence of the Wilhelmina when that vessel is seized, and it is not doubted that the reference to it in the embassy statement is a warning that more American vessels will be lost if this Government acquiesces in a British refusal to permit the Wilhelmina to discharge her food cargo at a German port.

### "Unavoidable Accident."

Comparing the embassy statement that in general American vessels going to Europe will be treated as dangerous, the statements in the Admiralty proclamation regarding the dangers of neutral ships being the victims of attack in British waters, the first case of this kind was reached here to-night that the German Government is disavowing in advance responsibility for any accident involving a neutral vessel in the waters proceeding to and from the United States.

### BREITUNG EXPLAINS.

Denies intention to cause trouble in buying Dutch.

Edward N. Breitung, owner of the Dutch ship *Wilhelmina*, which is being used by the German Government for the purpose of carrying foodstuffs to the British Isles, was interviewed today by a reporter of the *Washington Post* and denied the intention of causing trouble in the purchase of the ship by the German Government.

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## FRENCH DRIVE ON RAILROAD

A New Advance Is Reported Against Line Carrying Munitions to Germans.

Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.

PARIS, Feb. 6.—Further progress by the French troops, who are making a determined effort to cut the railway line which gives the Germans in the Champagne district a perfect east and west line of communications, is reported by the Government to-night and was the most significant operation of a day of comparative inaction in western Europe.

The report issued to-night indicates that the German attacks north of Masses, west of the Argonne and at a point where their control of the railway line would have been a serious obstacle to the French advance, have been stopped short and that the French are taking the offensive in this region. The advance reported is slight, but in two sectors the French have made considerable gains, since only a forward movement of a few miles is required to accomplish the end desired.

The French advance is particularly marked in Flanders and along the Aisne, the operations were confined to artillery fire with the Allies seemingly content to hold the Germans at a distance. The text of the report issued to-night was as follows:

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Japanese Crew Liable to Internment in Mexico or the United States.

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## RUSSIANS FIGHT TO FORCE GERMANSTO SILESIA LINE

Continued from First Page.

German line a new general engagement provoked by the Russian offensive in well under way. Military critics assert that the Germans will be dislodged from Poland and will be fortunate if they can regain the left bank of the Warthe without uttering a groan.

The first statement of the General Staff today indicates how German efforts weakened after the costly reverse at Borzhom and Goumling. Leaving 25,000 killed and wounded on the large plain over which their phalanxes had charged in such close pressed masses as had never been known in warfare the Germans were unable to hold the Russians to the east bank of the Buzza and Rakva. Their left wing was turned at Dakhova and a Russian force captured the German fortified positions on the west bank of the Buzza, near its junction with the Viatka. Their centre was pierced along the Rakva, and a Russian force occupied the German trenches and captured the most advanced German detachments.

The success at the Rakva, reported by the General Staff to-day, was the result of an unsuccessful German attack. The invaders, hoping to keep the advancing Russians at arm's length, built a pontoon bridge on barbed wire and sent three companies across the river to repel the Russian movement. Russian artillery, posted on elevated ground east of the Rakva, destroyed the bridge and the German companies. Crossing the Rakva under the protection of their artillery the Russians occupied the German trenches, making a separate division of corps and of steel, bulletproof shields which the Germans had used with much success in their massed attacks. In driving the Germans westward from the Rakva the Russians made excellent use of the captured shields.

### REGIMENTS OF POLES.

Petrograd Hears Separate Russian Corps Will Be Formed.

PETROGRAD, Feb. 6.—The Russian public and especially the Zemstvo Union in Moscow, has learned with enthusiasm and satisfaction that the Russian commander in chief has ordered the creation of a separate division of corps and of steel, bulletproof shields which the Germans had used with much success in their massed attacks. In driving the Germans westward from the Rakva the Russians made excellent use of the captured shields.

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